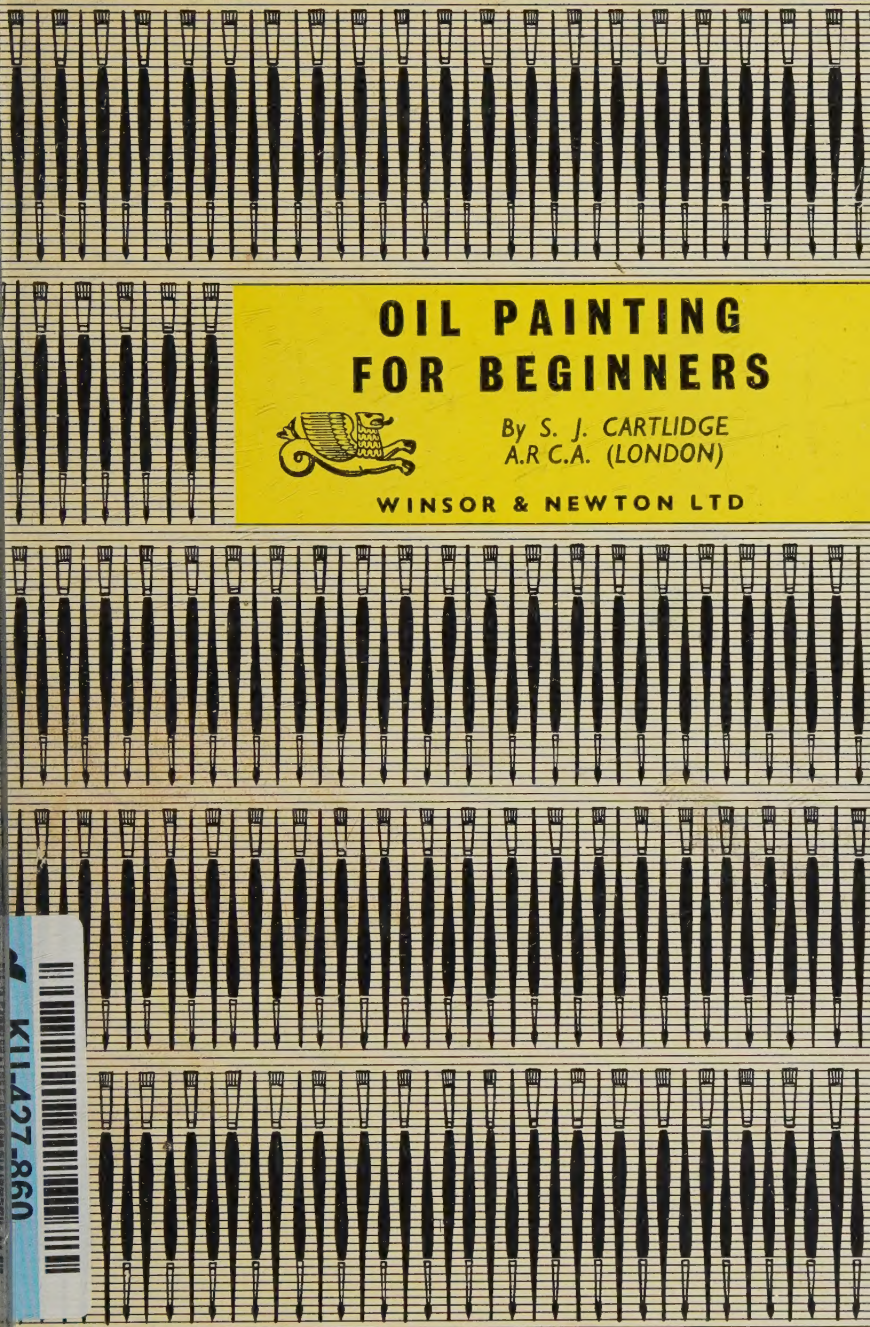

OIL PAINTING FOR BEGINNERS

By S. J. CARTLIDGE
A.R C.A. (LONDON)

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OIL PAINTING
FOR
BEGINNERS

A MANUAL OF ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION

By

S. J. CARTLIDGE, A.R.C.A. (Lond.)

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Ars probat artificem

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INTRODUCTION

IN the following pages it is our aim to give the young student a simple explanation of the processes of Oil Painting, together with directions as to a sound method of attaining skill in this fascinating art.

Anyone who sees something which appeals to the sense of beauty, arousing a desire to record the impression, or to make a picture inspired by it, will find effective means in the art of Oil Painting. Compared with other forms of expression Oil Painting ranks high by a wide range of colour and the full strong richness of its pigments.

For the beginner it is especially suitable, as alterations are easily made, and mistakes corrected without much difficulty. Moreover, as it is only by repeated corrections that most learners can expect to make progress, the importance to the tyro of such a medium as Oil Painting is obvious.

In beginning our study we should realize that the power of seeing truly must be developed, the nature, qualities and capacities of the materials clearly understood, and that real skill can only be acquired by steady, persistent effort: remembering always the pregnant words of Sir Joshua Reynolds, one of the great British exponents of the art: 'Nothing is denied to well-directed labour, nothing is to be attained without it."

If all this is kept in mind and faithfully followed there is no natural appearance which we may not in time be able to appreciate and imitate, or to utilize in our own original composition; whether it be the lovely colour of flowers, the charming contours of a beautiful child, the opalescent hues of a gleaming shell, or the golden glory of the setting sun.

CHAPTER I

HOW TO SEE

EMINENT painters have said that the greatest difficulty in the Art is to learn to see. Be this as it may, it is obvious that we cannot hope truly to represent the appearance of anything if we see it untruly. In these confusingly restless modern days there are some painters who regard truthful imitation of natural appearances as being inartistic. That view need not trouble the beginner, for it is impossible to express something having beauty if we cannot see the variations of form and colour which distinguish a beautiful from an ugly thing. Learning to see is leading the eye by practice to a high degree of sensitiveness to the varied forms and colours which surround us on every hand.

If we were to try to sing without having a correct ear for the varied sounds in music, we should emit only discordant noise which no one except the demented would care to hear. It is just the same in painting. If the colours we put in our painting are untrue and consequently inharmonious, discord and ugliness are produced and the result would displease any normal person seeing it.

How, then, are we to acquire the power of seeing truly? For it is a power to be acquired, and acquired and developed only by strenuous practice in analysing and comparing the appearances of our surroundings.

Further, it is plain that before we can analyse the complex appearances of landscape, the ever-changing clouds, the mobile sea, or the subtle shapes and tints of the human figure, we must be able to comprehend the appearance of a simple object.

We will try to analyse a simple object by taking a fowl's egg and placing it upon a large sheet of white paper laid flat on a table. Another sheet of white paper should be fixed upright behind the egg as a background. The light under which the egg is seen should come from the left; from a window, or from a source of artificial light, but it must be from a single window or from only one artificial light, to avoid cross-lights.

Looking carefully, we first observe the oval shape of the egg, and

then notice that the surface of the egg away from the light appears darker than the portion nearer to the light. We also see a darkened part of the horizontal sheet of paper, caused by the egg coming between the paper and the light.

Thus the light causes the egg to appear divided into two regions, a lighter one which we will call the "*light*," and a darker one, the "*shade*." The darkened part of the paper may, for distinction, be termed the "*shadow*." We thus have discovered by observation and analysis that the appearance of our egg and the paper on which it rests has three main divisions, "*light*," "*shade*," and "*shadow*."

Let us go farther by separately analysing these three main divisions, taking first the "*light*." This appears divided into two regions, one very light and the other slightly darker. The very light region we may call the "*high light*," and the slightly darker one the "*half light*," or, as it is often called, the "*half tone*."

Similarly, we shall find that the "*shade*" has two regions, one lighter and the other darker. We may call these "*half shade*" or "*reflection*," and "*full shade*," respectively.

In the "*shadow*" also we trace a slightly lighter region, "*half shadow*" or "*reflection*," distinguished from a darker region "*full shadow*."

Next, looking carefully at the tones of the egg ending in the boundary or contour, we see that in some parts they are lighter than the paper behind the egg, and in others darker. They are also here and there so nearly identical in tone with that of the paper that the eye scarcely perceives any boundary, the edge losing itself in the background.

Notice also that the boundaries, or edges, of the shade and the shadow vary in their degree of *clearness*, some being much softer and less clear than others.

Lastly, we must get a true value of the strengths or "*values*" of these different regions. The true pitch can be estimated by comparison. For example, we see that the shadow is dark, but the question is, how dark? If we compare it with something extremely dark, such as the sleeve of a black coat, or an ebony penholder held between our eyes and the egg, across its shadowed part, we get a reliable idea of its actual strength. In the case of the shadow it will probably be much lighter than we at first imagined.

A more deeply searching scrutiny of our egg would reveal refinements and details which we need not consider at present. We can safely begin the practice of painting if we bear in mind the details here described. Further developments may be left for later study.

We must not, however, omit noticing that in our analysis we have not considered the question of colour. We have limited our investigation to the appearance of "*lights*" and "*darks*." Colour will come best later. Preliminary knowledge of light and shade is a powerful aid in dealing with the difficulties of colour.

CHAPTER II

PIGMENTS

IN referring to the colours or pigments, we shall deal only with those which are absolutely necessary to the beginner in Oil Painting.

The pigments were formerly kept in a dry state, the painter mixing when he required from time to time with oil or other "medium." Then it became the custom for the colourman to supply them ready for use, made up in small bladders. Nowadays we have convenient collapsible metal tubes, from which the pigments may be squeeezed and applied directly to the picture, in many cases without the addition of any "medium" or "vehicle" beyond that with which the colours are mixed before being put into the tubes. It is important that the student should carefully choose his pigments, and use none that are not durable. Some pigments are notoriously fugitive; others, though not absolutely permanent, are durable when "locked up" in a suitable "vehicle," and some are practically permanent.

The following list includes all that are necessary for the beginner. They may, and no doubt will, be added to as the student acquires experience :

Flake White.
Aureolin.
Naples Yellow.
Yellow Ochre.
Raw Sienna.
Cadmium Yellow.
Vermilion.
Light Red.
Burnt Sienna.
Rose Madder.
Cobalt Blue.
Viridian.
Antwerp Blue or Prussian Blue.
French Ultramarine.
Raw Umber.
Vandyke Brown.
Ivory Black.

None of the pigments just named has the purity of the colours of the spectrum. For example, Light Red and Rose Madder are not absolutely pure reds, the former being yellowish and the latter purplish. Scientific experiment, however, has now produced pigments more nearly approaching the colours of the spectrum. They are called " Winsor Red," " Winsor Violet," etc., and the modern student will do well to add them to those already named.

Flake White.—This is simply white lead prepared in a special way. It is perfectly durable under ordinary circumstances, and is absolutely indispensable to the painter in oil. It has a full body and works agreeably, mixing well with other pigments.

Aureolin.—A rich and brilliant yellow pigment. It may be called the queen of yellows, being pure, transparent, rich and powerful; qualities which other yellow pigments do not possess in combination. It is quite permanent and mixes well with other pigments. The only fault it has is a very slight one, it being a rather slow drier when used in great quantity without much admixture of Flake White.

Naples Yellow.—The original Naples Yellow was made from lead and antimony, a compound which is liable to be injured if touched with the ordinary steel palette knife. But another variety, called French Naples Yellow, has lately been much used. It has no antimony in its composition, and is not injured by contact with steel. It is a rich opaque yellow, and is very useful.

Yellow Ochre.—This is a perfectly permanent pigment, made from natural earth. It is much used, as it dries well, has great body, and mixes agreeably with other pigments. When dry it appears slightly darker than when freshly laid upon the canvas.

Raw Sienna.—Another natural earth, perfectly durable. It is a slow drier, and is of a deeper and richer hue than Yellow Ochre, from which it differs also in possessing great transparency.

Cadmium Yellow.—A preparation of the Sulphide of Cadmium. It is exceedingly powerful in the deep varieties, mixes well with other pigments, and is a fairly good drier, but the paler varieties are not entirely safe, as mixed with white lead, they are liable to change in tint. However, when used with care, Cadmium is a most valuable pigment, and for certain tints is almost indispensable.

Vermilion.—The different varieties of Vermilion are artificial compounds of a heavy nature, and quite permanent under ordinary conditions, but should be replaced by Cadmium Red if the work is likely to be exposed to sunlight.

Light Red.—This is a natural yellow earth, calcined. It is a subdued rich red, a good drier, and most useful in flesh painting. It is perfectly permanent.

Burnt Sienna.—Calcined yellow earth of Sienna. It is a beautiful, transparent, rich orange red, quite permanent, and a fairly good drier.

Rose Madder.—A rich, transparent, bright red, perfectly permanent. In fact, with the exception of the Alizarin Lakes, which, however, are of lower brilliancy, the Madder Reds are the only thoroughly reliable transparent reds of brilliant colour. Rose Madder is a very slow drier, and needs the addition of some drying agent to work satisfactorily.

Cobalt Blue.—A pure light blue, slightly greenish in tint under artificial light. It is fairly transparent, is a good drier, and mixed with Flake White in greater or less degree, gives tints of great beauty. It mixes well with other pigments.

Viridian.—This is a reliable and permanent green pigment. It mixes well with other colours, and in tint, with Flake White, produces beautifully tender tones, varying from a rich warm green to a silvery greenish grey.

Antwerp Blue.—A variety of Prussian Blue, of much richness and transparency. It is greenish in tint, dries well, and is substantially permanent. Used in great quantity it is liable to "stain" pigments laid over it.

French Ultramarine.—A blue pigment, inclining to purple. It is transparent, has depth and richness, and is quite permanent. It is a good drier and combines agreeably with other pigments.

Raw Umber.—A warm brown earth of rich subdued tint. It is a most excellent drier, and mixed with white affords a useful series of delicate tones ranging from light brown to warm grey. It is quite permanent.

Vandyke Brown.—A transparent reddish brown pigment of much beauty. It is unfortunately a very bad drier, and has the disadvantage also of drying "dead" or dull upon the surface. Some painters

dispense with Vandyke Brown, substituting for it a mixture of Ivory Black and Burnt Sienna; but, although this mixture is a fair substitute, it is not so pure or rich in tint as Vandyke Brown.

Ivory Black.—Ivory Black is a preparation of calcined ivory. It is a transparent and rich pigment, quite permanent, but is a slightly slow drier. Mixed with Flake White it yields a series of delicate greys.

Other pigments may be selected as the student gains power, but much care should be exercised in their selection. It would be wise to consult a standard work on colours before adopting new pigments, however pleasing their hues may be.

CHAPTER III

VEHICLES

IN Painting, the term "vehicle" denotes the liquid agent by means of which the pigments are conveyed to the surface of the picture.

Vehicles should be thoroughly studied, as they greatly influence the pigments, and a bad vehicle should be avoided as strictly as a fugitive colour.

Oil Painting vehicles consist of oils, varnishes and volatile spirits, or combinations of them. Some vehicles retard, and others accelerate, the drying of the pigments. Some are apt to dry with a shiny, others with a dead surface. Risk of cracking is a characteristic of certain vehicles, whilst a tendency to darken is an annoying quality of others.

The ideal vehicle would be one which works freely, keeps its colour, does not injure the tints of the pigments, and is liable neither to cracking, "rivelling" nor "perishing" of the surface.

We will consider the qualities of a few of the most useful vehicles as enumerated below.

Linseed Oil. This is a much used vehicle. The best quality is of a pale, yellowish colour, and, though tending to dry slowly, is most serviceable. It is a strong oil, works well with ordinary pigments, and dries with a hard, firm surface. It has, however, a tendency to darken with age.

Poppy Oil. This is a slow drier but keeps its colour better than Linseed Oil. It works pleasantly, causing the colour to "flow" in some degree.

Nut Oil. This is not often used nowadays, as it is difficult to obtain, imitations often being substituted. Raw Nut Oil has similar qualities to those of Poppy Oil, but is a very slow drier. From this circumstance it is adopted by some painters who wish to keep parts of their pictures "open," to avoid repainting on a dry surface. But it is useful to know that the genuine Nut Oil, *clarified*, is a quick drier, drying much faster than Poppy Oil.

Drying Oil. To give Linseed Oil the property of drying rapidly, it is boiled with oxides and salts of lead. Drying Oil, of which there are usually two kinds, one dark and strong, and one pale and weak, is generally used with slow drying pigments.

Turpentine. This is a volatile oil, often used for thinning the ordinary oils, to get a " flowing " quality in the painting, as well as to prevent an excess of ordinary oil, which might injuriously affect the pigments. It tends to produce " deadness " of surface, and, used in excess, to cause cracking.

Benzene. This is sometimes used as a vehicle when a very dead or dull surface is aimed at in the painting. It is also often used for cleaning brushes which have from neglect become clotted or stained with pigment. It has powerful cleansing qualities, but its vapours are harmful.

Megilp. This vehicle, of which there are many varieties, is now little used because of the danger of later cracking. It combines the fluidity of a thin vehicle, with a firmness arising from the admixture of varnish, which keeps the colours in their proper places. One form of Megilp is made by taking equal quantities of linseed oil and mastic varnish, and adding a little very finely ground sugar of lead. This is pale in colour and makes a pleasant but dangerous jelly-like vehicle.

Win-gel Thixotropic Painting Medium. This is an all purpose, clear, synthetic resin, gelatinous medium. It is the complete ready-to-use medium for oil painting and the addition of diluent or other medium is neither necessary nor desirable.

Win-gel has all the delightful handling properties of the once widely used Megilp without the dangerous tendencies to yellow and crack for which that medium is notorious.

Win-gel makes oil paint easy to brush out, facilitates the painting of detail and yet enables the heaviest impasto to be laid.

Winton Painting Medium. Contains Stand Linseed Oil and purified Petroleum Spirit. This preparation may be employed with advantage for thinning the ordinary tube colours, and has no tendency to turn yellow, wrinkle, or crack.

* *Superfine Retouching Varnish* (*Vernis à retoucher*). This improved, quick drying, variety of Retouching Varnish consists of a specially processed Gum Dammar dissolved in a purified Petroleum Spirit. It is easy to use and extremely effective for retouching dull patches in an oil painting. It is also excellent as a temporary varnish.

Mastic Varnish. This is a compound of gum mastic and turpentine. It is useful in vehicles as well as for the final coat of varnish applied to the surface of a picture. Although, when used as a varnish, it is liable to " bloom," it has the advantage of being easily removable, to make way for a fresh coat of varnish. The Mastic Varnish used in vehicles is stronger than that used for final varnishing. The latter

is known as " Picture Mastic Varnish." The best Mastic Varnish is paler than the inferior kinds, being often as pale as Copal.

Copal Varnish. This should not be used as a final varnish, as it is liable to crack and cannot be removed. It is of use mixed with an ordinary vehicle to assist in drying slow pigments and is not dangerous in small quantities. The standard Copal Oil Medium contains equal parts of Linseed Oil, Turpentine and Picture Copal Varnish.

Amber Varnish. This is a pale, slow-drying varnish, and is said to keep its colour well. It is, however, seldom used, as, once applied to a picture, it dries so hard that it is scarcely possible to remove it without destroying the surface of the painting.

SYNTHETIC RESIN PICTURE VARNISHES

Winton Picture Varnish. This varnish—a solution of one of the modern synthetic resins in White Spirit—was introduced as a substitute for that very useful, but not very dependable, preparation known as Picture Mastic. While possessing all those advantages of transparency, ease of application, protective property, and facility and safety of removal which characterise Picture Mastic, the Winton Picture Varnish is quite free from the latter's well-known drawbacks.

* *Griffin Picture Varnish.* This modern varnish, developed from Winton Picture Varnish, is composed of Synthetic Resin dissolved in White Spirit together with a proportion of Stand Linseed Oil. Its special features are its permanent flexibility, freedom from yellowing with age and the durability of its high gloss. It dries with moderate rapidity to a clear film and has no unwelcome tendency to bloom. Winsor & Newton Ltd believe it to be the finest varnish it is possible to use for the protection of oil paintings. Although very pale and giving a perfectly clear film it is not absolutely colourless like Winton Picture Varnish.

* *Winton Matt Varnish.* Similar to Winton Picture Varnish but modified so as to dry matt. This useful varnish may be used on oil, water, or poster colours. Unlike glossy varnishes it does not darken the tone of water colours.

* *Winton Retouching Varnish.* This is a thinner variety of the Winton Picture Varnish. It is valuable for retouching dull places in dry oil paint, and may also be used for the general oiling out of a picture, or as a preliminary varnish. Whereas a final varnish should not be applied until at least six months after completion of the painting, a coat of Winton Retouching Varnish may be applied as soon as the colours are dry to the touch.

* *These items were not included in the author's original manuscript, but the publishers think readers will appreciate mention of recent introductions.*

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTS

NO one can work without the necessary tools, and it is a great point in the training of the student that his tools should be good and well selected, so that he is not handicapped by avoidable difficulties; and, more than all, that he may from the first be acquiring good habits of work.

We shall speak here only of the implements which are absolutely necessary. These are:

A Palette.
Hog-hair and Sable-hair Brushes.
A Palette Knife.
An Easel.
A Mahl Stick.
A Box of Oil Colours.
Some Charcoal.
A Looking-glass.
A Dipper.
Some Canvas,
or
Some Oil Sketching Boards,
and
A Painting Room.

The Palette.—Palettes are made of various substances, the best for the student being wood. A light mahogany is most suitable, its colour being unpronounced, and its surface hard and durable. Palettes are made of different shapes, the two chief types being the oval and the oblong. The oblong is perhaps preferable to any other, as it affords most room for mixing the colours, and may be made to fit into the lid of a colour box, so as to be easily put away without risking the rubbing of wet colours upon any of the surroundings. The palette should be not less than twelve inches long, and if larger all the better. It is necessary to keep the palette quite clean when not in use. Pigments should never be allowed to dry upon the palette. They should be removed with the palette knife, and the surface of the palette wiped clean with a soft rag and some linseed oil. In cleaning the

palette it is well to place it upon the level top of a table. In using the palette knife care should be taken to avoid scratching the surface of the wood.

If it is desired to save some of the pigments for use on another day they should be put on a piece of glass and placed under water until required.

Hog-hair Brushes.—These are the tools which will be always in use, so that we should be most careful in choosing suitable and reliable ones. They are made of various shapes—round, flat, short, long, thick, thin, etc. The late Sir Edward Poynter, P.R.A., recommended the use of round brushes for students as being more suitable for drawing than flat ones, and during his Principalship of the Royal College of Art at South Kensington they were largely used there. But perhaps the safest plan is to be provided with some of each kind, making the ordinary flat and round brushes the principal part of our collection.

In choosing hog-hair brushes we should see that the hairs are soft but at the same time springy. The springiness can be tested by moistening the hairs and pressing them down upon the palm of the hand. If the brush returns quickly to its original shape, it possesses the requisite amount of spring.

To begin satisfactorily, about eight flat and eight round brushes of varied size should be obtained, the flat brushes larger than the round ones. In fact, it is most desirable to paint always with brushes of as large a size as possible. No. 6 should be about the medium size chosen.

Sable-hair Brushes.—These are only needed for glazing and for finishing delicate passages of work. They should be of very fine hair, should have full " springiness," and when moistened should come to a fine clear point or edge.

After use each day the brushes should be thoroughly cleaned by wiping away accumulated pigment and then washing them well with common soap and cold water, finally rinsing them in clean cold water to get rid of the soap. Each brush should then be carefully brought into its proper shape and put aside to dry.

Palette Knife.—Palette knives are used for mixing tints upon the palette, as well as for cleaning its surface. They are made of various shapes, the most useful being the thin " trowel " shape. It would be best to have two palette knives, one of the ordinary shape, and one trowel-shaped.

The Easel.—Easels are of various kinds. The best for the student is a simple "radial" easel, by means of which the painting can be kept in a perfectly upright position or tilted forward so as to avoid "shine." A very large easel is not necessary to begin with, but it must be firm and one upon which the painting does not slope backward, as a slanting surface prevents our seeing the whole of the painting clearly.

Mahl Stick.—This is a rest for the hand to secure firmness in small touches. Many painters never use a Mahl Stick; indeed it should be used as little as possible, as it interferes with freedom of touch. The best are firm but slightly flexible, having a padded soft knob at the head to prevent injury to the painting.

Colour Box.—Colour Boxes are so varied in character that it is difficult to say which is the best to have. The main point is to have one which contains a palette and an ample supply of colours, brushes, vehicles, etc. A reference to an illustrated catalogue will help in the choice. Some artists prefer a wooden box, others a tin one. This is, after all, purely a matter of choice. It is, perhaps, wise to get one with an arrangement in the lid to hold sketching boards for use out of doors.

Charcoal.—Sticks of charcoal for sketching the subjects are necessary and Willow Charcoal is a suitable variety.

A Looking-glass.—This is one of the most useful requisites, as it enables us to obtain a reversed view of our work. When the eye is fatigued, it is apt to overlook errors, and a reversed view exhibits them forcibly to us. The glass should be of the best quality, so that there may be no risk of distortion.

A Dipper.—This is a small appliance to contain the vehicle, and is attachable to the palette.

Canvas.—This is kept either in rolls, or stretched upon wooden frames of various sizes. It should have an even surface, free from projecting lumps or knots, with which some of the inferior qualities abound. The surface is usually prepared by "priming," and the "single-primed" surface will be found best for the student.

Oil Sketching Boards.—These are cardboards specially prepared for Oil Painting, and are usually cheaper than good canvas. Academy boards, prepared hardboards, panels, etc., are all useful, the best being perhaps, those with a surface having a canvas-like texture. There are also boards supplied faced with canvas and specially prepared paper. But there is, after all, nothing so good as

the genuine stretched canvas, which, among other good points, has a flexibility and spring very agreeable to the painter's touch.

Painting Room.—The student who can work in a properly lighted studio has his way smoothed considerably. But many are only able to work in an ordinary dwelling room. In this case it is best to use the light of only one window, entirely blocking out the light coming from others. If the bottom of the window is rather low, a small portion of the lower part should also be blocked out, so as to get shadows having a slightly downward direction. The room should be one into which sunlight does not enter during the time of work.

CHAPTER V

PAINTING IN MONOCHROME

BEING now in the way to see correctly and knowing something about our materials, we will make our first attempt at painting.

Before attempting a difficult subject, we must master a simple one. We will therefore try to paint our egg as it appears when placed upon a piece of white paper, with a white background behind it. See Chapter I.

In Chapter I we analysed the appearance of the egg as a series of lights and darks. We will now try to express those lights and darks, or to paint our egg and its background in " Monochrome."

Two pigments only, Flake White and Raw Umber, will be required. They should be placed near the farther edge of the palette, the Raw Umber on the left of the Flake White.

A careful drawing in charcoal of our egg must first be made, on canvas or painting board. It will be best to make the drawing of the full natural size. The shapes of the shade and the shadow must be outlined with absolute truth. We must not forget that they are parts of the *appearance* of the egg which are as important as its contour. We could not express the relief of the egg from the paper upon which it stands without truly showing the shadow it casts upon the paper. Nor could we show its rotundity without truly representing its shade.

Our drawing being quite correct in every part, we will try to match exactly the strength or value of the " shadow." This will be done by mixing Raw Umber with Flake White, using the palette knife. Then, holding the palette knife with some of the mixed tint upon it, in front of, and side by side with the " shadow," with the full light of the window direct upon the colour, taking great care that it does not shine, we can compare our mixture with the tone of the " shadow." If it proves too dark, add some Flake White, mix, and try again. Carry out the same process by adding some Raw Umber if the mixed tint is too light. We must repeat this process until our mixture exactly matches the tone of the " shadow." This tint matching must be done from our point of view in front of our canvas, and not near to the egg. And we may be sure that our tint is not correct until we find, on holding the knife so as to cross the shadow, that our mixture

merges in the tone of the shadow without the slightest darker or lighter shade. We must not get weary of making corrections but persist in our tint mixing (which will grow easier by practice) until the absolute pitch of the tone desired is obtained. When our " shadow " tint is quite correct, we should gather it together with the palette knife, and place it near the left-hand side of the palette. Then we must mix and match in like manner, tints for the " shade," the " half-shade," the " half light " and the " high light."

These five tints being mixed and placed separately on the palette in sequence from the darkest to the lighest, we may proceed to lay them in their places upon our canvas.

With a No. 5 or 6 flat hog-hair brush, we will carefully lay the " shadow " tint in its proper place and of its true shape. The brush must not be held close to the hair like a pen, but as near the other end as possible, with a firm hold by the thumb and the first finger. Taking plenty of colour in the brush, we should lay it boldly upon the canvas without any backward and forward movement of the brush. Each touch of colour must be laid in its place with one movement of the hand. The direction of the touches does not matter very much, though " shine " may be avoided by slanting them away from the light.

Next we should lay in the tints of the " shade," the " half shade " and the " half light " or " half tone " in like manner. The " high light " will be painted after we have joined, by proper gradations, the tones now laid in their true positions.

We will attack these gradations by first joining the " shade " to the " half tone." In the actual egg before us we see that the two tones merge into each other softly and gradually. This is the most difficult process of our painting, for we must secure the softness of the gradation without destroying the firmness and the true shape of the "shade" boundary. But it may successfully be accomplished by carefully doing two things. First we must extend the " shade " tint *very slightly* beyond its exact boundary. Secondly, by mixing equal quantities of the " shade " tint and the " half tone " tint we shall obtain a middle tint lighter than the " shade " tint and darker than the " half tone " tint. If we lay this middle tint on in a narrowish band next to the " shade " tint, painting it into the extended edge of the " shade " tint, we shall get the proper gradation.

In our egg we see that the " half-tone " grows paler as it approaches

the " high light." A mixture of the " high light " tint with the " half tone " tint will enable us to express this gradation. Lastly, we must lay on the " high light " tint, firmly, and of full strength, in its proper position and true shape.

We must now mix other tints for the tone of the paper, both horizontal and vertical, surrounding the " shadow," and forming a background to the egg. The two light tones of the paper must, of course, be exactly matched. Having laid on these tints we can finish our painting by adding the " half shadow " tint, and softening the boundaries of the various tints wherever we find them soft in the actual egg before us. The " half shadow " tint may be produced by mixing a little of the " half shade " tint with the " shadow " tint.

Great care must be taken to soften the edges only in those parts where they appear soft in the actual object. All clear edges should be strictly preserved, to ensure variety in the quality of the contour.

The edges may be softened by very lightly dragging a dry hog-hair brush across them. A " badger hair softener " is often used by amateurs for this purpose; but it is a dangerous implement, seldom used by good painters.

We should now place our painting side by side with our actual egg, and, coming back to the point of view, compare the painting with the subject. Our scrutiny should be very searching, noting where the tones are too dark or too light; or where a tint has exceeded or fallen short of its true boundary, so that we may lay right tints over the wrong ones and bring the boundaries to their true shape. We must not lighten a tint by painting white into it on the canvas. We must carefully mix and match a new tint on the palette, and when it is quite true, lay it firmly over the false one.

Then, feeling that every correction has been made, a final test by comparing the painting and the subject seen in a looking-glass should be made, and any slight faults remedied by laying on correct tints, modifying shapes, and softening or sharpening edges, until seen from our original point of view, the painting is identical with the object in every tone and form.

This is the simplest method of learning to paint in monochrome, and it will be noticed that we have used no special vehicle beyond the oil contained in the tubes with the pigments. No other vehicle is needed for painting in solid tints. Special vehicles will be touched later.

CHAPTER VI

SOME PROCESSES

IN our Monochrome Painting we dealt simply with the representation of an egg in light and shade by a process involving only solid tints of colour. To understand this thoroughly is the foundation of the art of painting, but there are other processes which it is most important that we should understand.

For example, a pigment may be made to express many more changes of colour if used transparently as well as solidly in tint with white.

When Flake White is mixed with another pigment, it not only makes it lighter, but adds greyness to the tint. We will examine some examples of this, so as to understand the effect of white pigment on colours, and the different effect of the transparent use of the same pigments.

We will make an experiment by taking a canvas upon which a ground of pure Flake White has been laid and allowed to dry to a thoroughly hard state. Upon this dry white ground we will first lay a tint of pure Raw Sienna, which, as we know, is a rich transparent yellow pigment. Some painting medium will be required to thin the colour, so as to get a moderately light tint. Here we shall find a beautifully pure, rich, luminous yellow. Next to this transparent tint we will lay an opaque one, by mixing Flake White and Raw Sienna with the palette knife until a tint *as light in tone* as the transparent one has been obtained. On comparing the solid tint with the transparent one we find that the richness of the yellow is very much diminished, the opaque tint appearing *colder or greyer* than the pure tint of Raw Sienna and medium.

We will go a step farther by painting over half of the transparent tint (when thoroughly dry) a thin film of Flake White to which some painting medium has been added. Here we find that a still cooler and greyer tint is obtained.

Thus, the same two colours, yellow and white (the white ground shining through the yellow in the first tint), by being applied differently give three tints of very different quality.

It will be well to experiment in the same way with other pigments, such as Burnt Sienna, Ivory Black, Cobalt, Rose Madder, Antwerp Blue, and Vandyke Brown, and thus acquire a safe elementary knowledge of the varied effects of transparent painting, opaque painting and semi-opaque painting.

The knowledge gained in this particular manner will lead to a right appreciation of two important processes in Oil Paintings, which are called " Glazing " and " Scumbling."

Glazing is the application of transparent colour thinly over an under painting.

Glazing is resorted to when richness of effect is required, and when certain colours are wanted that cannot be got by mixture. As an example, the intensely vivid colour of the scarlet geranium cannot be attained by solid colour. But a near approach to its marvellous brilliance may be effected by an under-painting of a brilliant yellow, upon which a transparent coat of Alizarin Carmine is glazed. Brilliant sunsets, too, require similar treatment.

Subdued richness is also to be obtained by judicious glazing, and, indeed, glazing is useful in many cases, which we have not space to mention.

To glaze properly, painting medium must be used to dilute the pigment so as to attain the necessary degree of transparency.

Like many other good things, glazing, if indulged in to excess, is bad, as it tends to produce a " horny " and unpleasant effect.

If a glaze turns out to be too dark, it can, while wet, easily be lightened or removed with a soft silk rag.

Glazing should usually be done with a soft brush, and the under-painting must be perfectly hard, or the pigment underneath will rub into the glazing colour and make the tint impure.

Before putting on the colour in glazing, the dry surface of the under-painting should be " oiled out." This process is simply the laying on of a thin film of linseed or drying oil, into which the glaze is painted.

Scumbling is the application of opaque colour thinly over an under-painting. Its effect is usually the opposite of glazing, as will be inferred from the effect of a scumble of Flake White over a tint of Ivory Black. But scumbling may be done with warm opaque colours as well as cold ones, and the effect as regards colour depends, of course,

upon the tint used. Still, the general outcome of scumbling is to obscure and soften the under-painting, and it is often resorted to in landscape to produce an effect of distance.

Scumbling is usually done with a hog-hair brush. As in glazing, the under-painting should be perfectly hard before the scumble is applied.

" Impasting " is the loading or thickening of the lightest tints, very effective when properly managed, but dangerous for the young student to follow. Yet there is a good reason for its use, because oil pigments tend to sink into the ground upon which they are laid, and unless the lightest tints of our picture are painted thickly, they may lose force by sinking into the ground or canvas.

" Handling " refers to the way in which the painter lays on his colours. In the earlier stages of his study this is not very important, though relief may be helped and form accentuated by letting the touches follow the rotundity of the object imitated. A good manner of handling can only be acquired by the observation of pictures by the great masters, in some of which their manner is very obvious. Rubens and Tintoretto are specially suitable for study, as also is Sir Henry Raeburn, of our own country. Gainsborough sometimes indulged in a peculiar kind of handling, which is interesting to observe. The work of John Pettie, W. Q. Orchardson, J. McNeil Whistler, Holman Hunt, John S. Sargent, H. H. La Thangue, W. Orpen, and G. F. Watts may be examined with advantage for diversity of handling.

CHAPTER VII

PAINTING IN COLOUR

WE will now make our first attempt to represent an object in colour. The study of colour is so complex and baffling that it is necessary to begin with a simple object, of fairly positive colour.

We will choose an apple whose dominant colour is red, and place it upon a light coloured shelf with something almost white upright behind it as a background. A post card or any light whitish substance will suffice. The light should fall upon the apple from the left, as in the study of the egg, and the apple should lie with its eye facing to the left.

Looking carefully at the apple we see that it has its several regions of " shadow," " reflection," " shade," " half shade," " half tone," and " high light," just as the white egg had in our monochrome study. In the egg these variations of tone were easily seen, as the surface was white. In the apple they are not so easily seen because deep hues of colour appear in the region of light. Look at the red which joins the " high light." In a white object it would be only very slightly darker than the " high light," but here it is considerably darker owing to the intensity of the red hue brought out by direct light. We may say that the tone is overcome by the hue.

But look at the region of " shade " on the right-hand side of the apple. There we see that the hue is overcome by the tone. The deprivation of direct light in the region of " shade " has diminished the intensity of the red hue.

Notice that the " high light " is a reflection of the blue sky outside the window, very slightly modified by the colour of the apple. Note also the delicate reflection of the apple in the shelf beneath it, and the reflected colour of the apple in the left-hand region of the " shadow " cast upon the post card. These appearances emphasize the fact that we are now dealing mainly with varied hues of colour. Our monochrome practice has given us the power of seeing and expressing tone values in light and dark. We have now to develop power to see and express hue values in colour.

Having made a careful charcoal drawing, including the shapes of the " shadow " and the " shade " as well as the form of the eye of the apple, we will set our palette, arranging the pigments in the following order from right to left.

Flake White.
Cadmium Yellow Deep.
Yellow Ochre.
Raw Sienna.
Rose Madder.
Viridian.
Prussian Blue.
Ivory Black.

Proceeding exactly as we did with the egg, we will first mix the " shadow " colour with the palette knife. This " shadow " colour should be got by a mixture of Prussian Blue, Yellow Ochre, a little Rose Madder, and Flake White. If the background is a cool white, a very small quantity of Ivory Black may also be needed.

Having matched the " shadow " colour correctly, we should mix the colour of the " shade " on the right-hand side of the apple. It will be obtained by Rose Madder, Prussian Blue, and Raw Sienna. Next, the " half shade " on the apple should be mixed and matched. This is difficult to match. While it has a rich red hue, it is not so intense as the rich lighter red coming next to it in the " half light."

The tint of the " half light," a rich pure red, got by a mixture of Rose Madder, Cadmium Yellow Deep, and a little Flake White will follow.

The general tint of the post card or other white background should also be mixed and carefully matched. It it is at all untrue in pitch it will throw the tints of the apple out of tune.

These five tints may conveniently be arranged on the palette in a series running from the lightest on the right to the darkest on the left. We should begin the actual painting by carefully laying on with a No. 4 or 5 flat hog-hair brush, the " shadow " colour, in its proper place, and of the correct shape, on the horizontal shelf and on the light background. The warm reflection from the apple on the left-hand side and the strong dark accent immediately under the apple can be laid on afterwards.

Then paint in the following order: (*a*) the general tint of the background or post card; (*b*) the colour of the "shade"; (*c*) the colour of the "half shade"; (*d*) the colour of the "half light." Here we shall have five patches of colour forming the foundation of our painting. These flat tints meet each other in clear, sharp boundaries and we must next paint into these boundaries proper transitions of colour, gradated exactly as they naturally merge into one another in the actual apple now before us.

Although the order in which we paint these gradations is not of much moment, we will begin by gradating the "shade" to the "half shade." We must mix together about equal parts of the "shade" colour and the "half shade" colour. We thus get a new tint lighter than the "shade" colour and darker than the "half shade" colour, and containing a modified hue of each; a new tint which we may call a middle tint. This middle tint is then carefully laid over the boundary between the "shade" colour and the "half shade" colour, in a band which overlaps both, and being painted while the "shade" colour and the "half shade" colour are both wet blends somewhat with each, and so helps to effect the gradation. The middle tint should be laid on boldly and great care should be taken to make it follow the path of the boundary that it covers. Precisely in the same way we must paint the gradation of the "half shade" into the "half light," viz., make a new tint by mixing the "half shade" colour with the "half light" colour and lay the new or middle tint over the boundary of the "half shade" and "half light" tints.

Next, the warm reflection on the left and the dark accent under the apple in the "shadow" must be painted by two new tints; the former got by adding a little Rose Madder and Flake White, and the latter by adding a little Prussian Blue to the "shadow" tint.

If a penumbra is seen on the background behind our actual apple it may be expressed by a new tint; a mixture of a little of the "shadow" tint with a fairly large quantity of the background tint.

The colour of the shelf on which the apple stands, if it is shiny, will be got by adding the tiniest touch of Prussian Blue to the background tint. The reflection of the apple in the shelf is a compound of this shelf tint with the "half-light" tint of the apple.

We must next look carefully at the contour of the apple and soften

those parts which come softly against the background, at the same time scrupulously preserving the sharpness of those which are clear. Softening is effected by lightly passing a dry brush along the edge to be softened. The brush should be a sable or other soft-haired brush. The contour of the apple will probably be very sharp at the top and pass in varied degrees of softness and sharpness on each side until at the bottom, next to the dark accent in the cast shadow it becomes very sharp again. These degrees of sharpness and softness and the positions in which they occur depend entirely upon the shape of the apple and its lighting. Our care should be to express them absolutely true in degree and position to their appearance in the actual object before us.

We now have the main masses of our subject laid in, and we shall complete our painting by adding the modifications of tint arising here and there from the pattern, so to speak, and variations of shape in the apple. These are best done while the painting is wet, but the beginner may find it easier to add them in a second painting on the dry surface of the first painting. To do this it will be advisable to "oil out" the dry surface by carefully laying on a very thin film of linseed oil to make the added tints unite easily with those of the first painting. The oil should be applied with a hog-hair brush, and if too much has been laid on, the excess may be removed by a soft silk rag.

If there are yellowish streaks radiating from the eye of the apple these should be laid on first with a small hog-hair brush. The tints can be obtained from Cadmium Yellow Deep, Rose Madder, and Flake White. The eye of the apple will probably need tints of Raw Sienna and Prussian Blue in the dark parts, and Raw Sienna, Viridian, and Flake White in the lighter parts. Prussian Blue, Rose Madder, and Flake White will give the "high light." If we have chosen a post card for the background of our actual apple it would be well to paint the letters and postmarks with tints made somewhat fluid by the addition of a little painting medium.

Having thus completed the smaller detail, we should now finish our painting by the careful correction of any tints which appear untrue. If we place our canvas by the side of the actual object and use the looking glass, we can easily detect false tones and hues in our painting, and the setting right of these errors will bring our work to a successful end.

We may find that absolute completion is not possible without working upon our study again after the second painting is dry. For this third painting the dry surface must be prepared by oiling out, just as we prepared the dry surface for our second painting. And in a second or third painting it is often advisable to use smaller and softer-haired brushes than those used in the first. It is also wise to add some painting medium or other medium to the tints to help in effecting their complete union with the under-painting.

Wherever painting medium is mentioned this may be simply a mixture of Linseed Oil and Turpentine. Copal Oil Medium is also suitable, while many modern painters use Stand Oil and Petroleum Spirit (Winton Painting Medium). It is a good practice to use a minimum of oil in underlying paint layers, increasing the oil content of the vehicle successively for second and subsequent paintings.

CHAPTER VIII

STILL LIFE

THE next step in our scheme of study is the painting of "Still Life." It is usual to apply this term to any arrangement of objects not in motion, whether consisting entirely of pottery, metal work, game, fruit, flowers, etc., or of combinations of such objects.

The chief utility of Still Life Painting at this stage of our study lies in its bringing before us the difficulties of texture and composition. It thus forms a link between the more elementary work of imitative painting from single objects, and the intricacies of landscape and the human figure, which include the most subtle contrasts of surface, form, texture, and colour, and entail many perplexities in arrangement and composition.

In arranging a group of objects for study, we should aim to have contrasting varieties of surface. For example, the bright shining surface of a piece of glazed pottery, the dull dead one of a peach, the rough, pitted skin of the orange, and the smooth, even surface of a piece of ivory. Draperies afford contrast of texture. Compare the surface of a carpet with that of a piece of silk or satin. A little thought will bring numerous other instances to mind.

Contrast of form should also be attained. The rectangular form of a book, contrasted with the rounded one of a jar or vase; the loose, free form of some kinds of flowers with the rigid shape of a metal bowl, afford instances of such contrast.

Contrast and harmony of colour must not be overlooked. Some trials in arrangement will be necessary to acquire power in this particular, and a study of the scientific principles of colouring would be helpful.

The objects should be arranged so as to have a principal note of colour or of form dominant in the group, though fully harmonizing with the subsidiary notes. Some modern painters, notably Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, have painted Still Life not so arranged, but we shall do well to begin as directed above.

Supposing the group to be arranged, we shall find it well now to try another method of imitating the patches of colour, partially discarding the palette knife for the mixture of tints. This method follows well the preparatory practice of mixing tints with the palette knife, and

is a method adopted by many successful painters. It is, briefly, to place the easel and canvas by the side of the group of objects, fixing the canvas carefully in an upright or slightly tilted forward position to avoid shine on the pigments. Then, observing from the point of view a tint, mix it with the brush upon the palette, and walk up to the easel to lay the tint upon the canvas, retiring again to the point of view to compare the painted tint with that in the group. By repeating this process, the whole picture will take form under the influence of the most severe comparison it is possible to have. One may get a little tired of walking, but with perseverance in laying tint upon tint, the painting gradually grows like the group, and the interest in its development will dispel physical weariness.

The greatest difficulty will be found in refraining from applying tints to the canvas until they are absolutely correct in pitch of colour.

If fruits or flowers form part of the composition, a first painting in solid tints may not suffice to complete the painting, and glazing must be resorted to. A little practice will give us the knowledge when to adopt and when to refrain from glazing.

It sometimes happens that the surface of the painting becomes too rough by repeated application of pigment. This may be corrected by scraping it with a sharp razor, which can, of course, only be successfully done when the under-painting is perfectly dry and hard. Care must be taken to hold the razor blade at right angles to the surface. In Still Life, judicious scraping in certain parts is an aid to the expression of variety of texture.

Steady persistence in Still Life practice will prepare us for any more difficult branch of the art, if we are careful to arrange our groups of objects under different conditions of light and shade, viz. some with rich broad shadows, some in full light; some made up of light objects, some of dark ones; some in which the colour scheme is subdued and tender, others having a scheme of brilliant colours; some with sparkle and glitter, others with soft, sweet gradations, etc., and having secured a beautiful arrangement working always with the fixed and rigid aim of absolute truth in imitation of every tint the eye can distinguish.

This course will ensure solid progress and give true pleasure in its development, the eye gaining continually an increased faculty of seeing truly, as the hand attains more and more the power of expressing what is seen.

CHAPTER IX

THE FIGURE

THIS is the most difficult branch of painting, and can here only receive a few general remarks which may be of use to the beginner.

To paint the human figure with success we should, of course, be able to draw it with precision, as every tint laid upon our painting will be shaped according to the form of the surface of the figure. Thus every touch will be, so to speak, *drawn,* and an imperfect knowledge of the construction and drawing of the figure will naturally cause an imperfect painting.

This knowledge of the form of the human figure can scarcely be attained without some study of Anatomy, and the earnest student is recommended to study some simply treated work on the subject.

What may be called non-imitative paintings of the human figure are made by certain modern painters. Real knowledge of the natural form of the figure will enable the student to see truly in such paintings the ingenious symbols of expression which such painters use, and justly to value their artistic force.

The method of painting is substantially the same as for Still Life, the model or sitter being side by side with the canvas.

For flesh painting, some artists say that only six pigments are necessary, viz.:

Flake White.
Rose Madder.
Raw Sienna.
Burnt Sienna.
Cobalt Blue.
Ivory Black.

But this range of pigments cannot be adequate for all kinds of figure painting. For instance, some pigments would be needed to paint a dark-skinned person different from those necessary for one of fair complexion. In the former probably no very light yellow would be

used, whilst in a fair-skinned subject Naples Yellow is almost indispensable. For some complexions, Light Red, Venetian Red, or Indian Red would be needed. For others a green pigment such as Oxide of Chromium would have to be added to the list. Other modifications of pigment for different flesh tints will readily occur to the student.

The golden rule in this, as in all other branches of imitative painting is to aim manfully at exact imitation of the varied tints by solid painting, glazing and scumbling only after the first painting shows incompleteness when dry. By this means only can the requisite completeness and finish be obtained.

It may be pointed out that the contours of the figure are very subtle in their variety of edge. In parts they are softened by the down and hair growing on many parts of the skin. In others they are tense and sharp, particularly where a tendon is drawn tightly under the skin. Then the different appearance of the skin where it covers bone only, from its aspect when covering fully fleshy muscle, has to be observed and represented.

On the whole, for the landscape painter as well as for any other artist, the practice of painting the human figure is of the highest value in training the eye to detect the most subtle changes of form and colour.

CHAPTER X

LANDSCAPE

THERE are many systems of Landscape Painting arising from the personal tendencies of different painters, and from the class of subject or type of effect which may be treated. Some painters work upon an ordinary canvas light primed ground, and paint thickly. Others paint thinly on the same ground. Some work upon a dark ground, painting all dark tints very thinly with much vehicle, and the light tints very thickly, so as to stand out from the surface of the picture. Some painters, the great Turner included, have combined others methods with oil painting, thinking this necessary to obtain their effects.

But the beginner in Landscape, after going through our previous course, should go out to nature with the aim of copying faithfully, in solid tints, some simple piece of foreground; something, in fact, which is but a step beyond a still life group as regards difficulty of form. He will have all the perplexity of dealing with a diffused light, and it will require some practice to get into the way of painting out of doors.

After doing this foreground study he may next try a simple landscape effect on a grey day, when there are no strong and changing contrasts of sunlight and shadow to puzzle him.

He will have to paint from his point of view, and his tint-matching with the knife will be much curtailed; but his previous practice should have given him the power to match with some degree of truth without using the knife.

He can thus go on from a simple subject to one more difficult, and in time will have a power and a pleasure of which no human being can rob him.

He should not trust to empirical recipes for the mixing of tints, but by faithful and persistent trials in tint-matching obtain a practical knowledge of the means of expression such as no other method can give.

The student should also cultivate his memory. Some of the most beautiful effects in Landscape are very fleeting. The memory is best exercised by making notes of any beautiful evanescent effect at the moment, and afterwards painting it in the quiet of the painting-room. Continued practice will give the memory much power. Some of the greatest landscape painters, including our own Turner, constantly followed this improving practice.

CHAPTER XI

COPYING PICTURES

ALTHOUGH the young student must carefully avoid falling into a habit of picture copying, it is important that he should make copies of one or two good pictures as soon as he has gained some knowledge of the powers of his pigments and the methods of their manipulation.

He will discover in this way better than in any other the manner in which a master of the art has employed the different processes of solid painting, glazing, scumbling, etc.

Copying works by the great masters has also a good influence upon the way of seeing nature. If the student has natural tendencies to see gaudy rather than pure colour, on the one hand, or lifeless, dull tints rather than subdued richness on the other, such tendencies will be corrected by means of copying. He will, as it were, learn to look at nature with the eyes of the master he copies.

The choice of a picture to copy should be left to the student, bearing in mind, however, not to choose one which is sketchy or loose in the handling, or too "mannered" in the expression of form.

Dexterous and cleverly dashed-off forms give a manner of handling only acquired by the master after long years of practice, and it would be as reasonable to hope to copy them successfully as it would be to try to imitate rapidly-executed handwriting.

For the beginner in Landscape Painting, Richard Wilson's smaller pieces are suitable, as are also works by the elder Crome, Bonington and of French painters, Rousseau.

For figures and portraits, Raeburn, Rubens, Franz Hals, Vandyke, and Reynolds will afford useful examples, always taking care to choose a carefully-finished subject.

In the branch of small "genre" subjects, which often contain exquisite specimens of still life painting in their backgrounds and accessories, Terburg, Chardin, and De Hooge are the masters to follow.

The picture being chosen, it should be carefully studied so as to

find out where the tints are solid, and where covered by a " glaze " or " scumble."

The existing tints of the picture should be faithfully matched, even though they be rather darker than when originally painted. Much patience will be required to accomplish this successfully; many miscalculations will doubtless be made, especially in attempting the colour of the under-tint in " glazed " or " scumbled " passages; but intelligent effort and perseverance in this preparatory work will secure their due reward in an ability to appreciate readily and imitate the varied tones and tints, whether in an existing picture or in Nature herself; an ability which no mere instruction or reading can hope to convey in an equally satisfactory manner.

Note and carefully copy the exact degree of distinctness or softness of each tint boundary, and preserve the degrees of gradation from warm to cold colour in the various parts.

Another point will bring itself to the notice of the student in copying a good picture. This is composition, particularly in the matter of colour, in which the choice of the tint best adapted to enhance its neighbour will not only win the admiration, but open the student's eyes to a most fascinating and important part of the Art.

CHAPTER XII

PERSPECTIVE AND REFLECTIONS

THIS necessary branch of the art can only receive brief notice here, but some simple directions will be given to aid the student in seeing correctly.

The first simple but striking fact in perspective is that objects appear smaller than their actual size when at any distance from the observer, and this diminution in size increases in proportion as the objects recede from the observer.

A very simple and useful experiment may be made in any street containing the ordinary street lamps. Standing near one in such a way as to get those farther from it almost in a line with it, we shall observe two things. First, that the lamps appear smaller and smaller the farther they are away from us. Second, that the tops of the lamps appear *lower,* and the bottoms, where they join the ground, appear higher, the farther away they are from us. We will now hold a pencil so as apparently to touch the tops of the lamps. Although we know that the lamps are actually of equal height from the ground, our pencil is slanted, the end of it touching the top of the farthest lamp being *lower* than the nearer end. In the same way, by holding the pencil so as to apparently touch the lowest portions of the lamp-posts, it is again slanted, the farther end being *higher* than the nearer one.

The same fact will be demonstrated by looking down a street of houses of equal height. The roof line of the houses "*vanishes*" *downwards,* and the floor line *upwards.*

So much for form. Variations of tone in perspective must also be carefully noted. By comparing the colour of the nearest lamp-post with those in the distance we shall find that the farther they are away, the lighter in tint and greyer and colder in tone the colour appears.

A little thought and experiment will enable the student to apply these simple facts to the appearances of other objects in nature. For example, it would be wrong to make a tree in the extreme distance as high, or to paint the colour of its leaves as dark, or as decidedly green, as one of the same height much nearer to us.

Then in regard to Reflections. If we look at a perfectly calm piece of water we shall find that objects near to it and opposite to us have their images reflected upon its surface. The images thus reflected are exact counterparts of the original objects, but are upside down. In the case of a post standing out of the water, we can by measurement find that the length of the reflected image is exactly equal to that of the original object. But should the surface of the water be disturbed, the reflection becomes less distinct and apparently lengthens. If a ripple increases very much the reflection will almost entirely disappear, being broken up by the waves.

The colour of the objects is also reflected very vividly in clear, still water, and is weakened by a ripple on the surface. The colour of the sky reflected in water should be attentively observed, its intensity in smooth water being carefully compared with its weakened and broken-up hues in rough water.

Careful observations of these simple natural appearances will lead to the discovery of others having greater complexity and charm in effect.

CHAPTER XIII

TINTS AND EFFECTS

THE painting of trees is always full of disconcerting difficulties. To surmount these it is, perhaps, best to consider first of all the colour. This varies so very much in relation to the effect of light (the same tree seen in bright sunlight appearing quite different in colour when viewed under a grey sky) that it is difficult to say what pigments should be used. The golden rule of colour-matching should be followed. We may, however, safely make experiments under an ordinary quiet daylight effect, leaving the stiffer problem of leaves in sunlight for later effort.

For green trees in early summer we can try, for those nearest us, Antwerp Blue, Yellow Ochre, and a little Aureolin for the lightest parts; for the middle tint we may find Viridian and Yellow Ochre useful; whilst the shadows will find a safe basis in a mixture of French Ultramarine, Raw Sienna, and Burnt Sienna.

For more distant trees, which become lighter and cooler in colour, substitute French Blue or Cobalt Blue for the Antwerp Blue, and neutralize the strength of the green by a red pigment, such as Light Red or Vermilion.

For trees still more distant, Lemon Yellow may be introduced along with Cobalt, or even so pale a blue as Cerulean Blue, and Vermilion, Flake White also being used freely in the tints of remote distances.

As to the form of trees, great care must be taken to express the *contour* with strict exactness. Any variety of tree can be unmistakably recognised by its contour. Of course, other points must be observed and imitated, such as the varied characters of branching, thickness or sparseness of foliage, size of stem, texture of bark, or its ruggedness etc.

In skies the great point is to preserve brightness. Compare the tone of the sky with that of the landscape even on a very dull day, and at first you will be surprised at the lightness of tone in the sky.

Commence with your highest light, painting downwards from that to the darkest passages of cloud-shadow.

In putting on the blue of the sky, remember that it is not a rank, hard blue. It may be very bright and intense, but always needs the

addition of some (very little) yellow pigment, such as Yellow Ochre, as well as a generous allowance of Flake White, to get its lightness. Both Cobalt and Cerulean Blue are very useful for skies, and French Ultramarine is necessary for some sky tints.

The lighter tints of clouds, seen in ordinary daylight effects, may be well imitated with Yellow Ochre and Flake White, with the added strength of a little Aureolin in some more brilliant effects. The shadows will be best arrived at by a mixture of Cobalt Blue, Light Red, and Yellow Ochre. In more distant parts use Vermilion instead of Light Red, and Cerulean Blue in place of Cobalt.

A common fault is to paint the light portion of clouds *too white*. By aiming at the lightness of the sky we are apt to make the clouds too "*chalky*." We must not fear using yellow.

Sunset effects are very fascinating and are often easier to paint than quieter pieces of colour. Glazing is frequently needed in the vivid passages. Rose Madder, Lemon Yellow, Aureolin, and Emerald Green find their use in such effects. The light but brilliant yellow green of the sky under such conditions is sometimes imitated by mixing Emerald Green, Lemon Yellow, and Flake White. If Emerald Green is used, remember that it must not be mixed with Cadmium Yellow.

In flesh painting, colour effects depend not merely upon the light under which the figure is viewed, but upon the complexion, or "mother colour" of the person represented.

For very fair people, the lighter tints may be based upon Naples Yellow, Rose Madder, Cerulean Blue, and Flake White, the half-tones being got with the same pigments, using less white and more blue. The shadows will probably find their foundation in Yellow Ochre, Light Red, and Cobalt.

For darker people, give up the Naples Yellow and Cerulean Blue, substituting Yellow Ochre and Cobalt, adding Raw Sienna and Burnt Sienna for the shadows.

For very dark people, try Raw Sienna, French Ultramarine, Light Red and Burnt Sienna, introducing Vandyke Brown in the shadows.

These few hints may serve as a groundwork for the trial of tints, but it must not for a moment be forgotten that patient tint-matching and experiment with different pigments is the only safe means of arriving at truthful and good colour.

CHAPTER XIV

COMPOSITION

IN our chapter on still life, composition has been mentioned, and some of its principles are there indicated.

The composition of a picture is really the right arrangement of the different details so that they shall fit one another and combine to make a beautiful pictorial effect.

Let us try to look at the subject from a very simple point of view. Suppose we intended to paint a picture of three eggs. It would obviously be absurd to paint them lying separately from each other all in a straight line, and each presenting a side view to the observer, or each with its end, so to speak, facing him. Thus the necessity of *arrangement,* or composition, arises. We must try to so place the eggs that they will make an agreeable impression upon the eye, and experience has shown that the best way of doing this is to make them into a group, thus getting what, in composition, is called *unity* of effect.

Next, we must avoid monotonous repetition of form, by placing each egg in a different position from that of its neighbour; say, for instance, one showing a side view, another an end view, and the third a three-quarter view. Thus *variety* of form would be gained. But do not let us imagine that these side, end, and three-quarter views would give the best composition. They are simply mentioned to illustrate the principle of variety of form.

The best way to learn about this would be to get three eggs and experiment with them, changing their positions until a pleasing effect has been obtained.

But the light and shade has also to be studied as well as the form. Here the principle of unity should be observed by avoiding separation of the shadows as much as possible. Variety of light and dark should be got by trying to secure one spot of light brighter than the rest, to make the strongest or most dominant accent of the composition. With the shadows, too, one dominant darkest portion should appear, and the eye led from the darkest to the brightest point of the group by gradually varied strengths of light and dark.

Colour, too, enters largely into the question of good composition. Variety of tint is of great consequence in this respect. For example, our eggs could be chosen of different tints, say, one yellowish, one bluish, and one pinkish in colour. Then the question of contrast of colour would enter into the scheme by the choice of a background of a hue best calculated to enhance the tints of the eggs.

These few practical hints may be of service, and though it is not possible to lay down absolute rules, experiment carried out on the lines here indicated, progressing by degrees from simple to complex details, and diligent observation of good pictures, will lead to the acquirement of good composition.

It may be added that study of the composition of simple pattern is a powerful aid in the development of skill in artistic arrangement. Although this is superficially regarded as a matter for the designer, some knowledge of it as treated in the present author's book on " Original Design " is of use in the composition of pictures.

CHAPTER XV

MOVEMENT

ONE of the greatest difficulties one meets with in the art of Painting is in the representation of moving objects. This is easily seen from the well-known illustration of a moving train, which, if photographed instantaneously as it rushes along, appears in the photograph to be quite motionless. All the details, all the parts of the wheels, etc., are reproduced with great fidelity, yet there is no sense of movement.

It is just the same in a photograph of a boat being swiftly carried through the water, as is shown so clearly in many boat-race photographs, in which the oars appear quite still.

The truth is that the eye is so peculiar an organ that it cannot follow every step of every movement in nature, but it gathers an *impression* from the movement, which is always associated in the mind with the particular movement seen. For instance, a quickly moving wheel gives a blurred impression to the eye. A boat rowed quickly through the water gives an impression of the *accent* of the rower's movement, or, in other words, the eye seizes upon the movement where the greatest exertion appears to be made.

For the study of movement little can be said in a book of this kind, except to advise the young student to be always observing moving objects, and carefully noting their impressions upon the eye, especially looking for the accent, or greatest stress of the movement, which generally will be found capable of effective expression.

A story is told of Turner, that he spent the whole of one day on the bank of a pool, throwing stones into the water and studying the effect of the moving ripples. He was seen by an ignorant person, who said of him that he was evidently the laziest man possible. This should be a valuable example for the student, not only in regard to the study of movement, but to inevitable encounters with ignorant criticism, which at times may be calculated to discourage him.

Discouragement, however, should be cast aside, and the recollection of this little story about Turner may help sometimes to repel it.

MOVEMENT

Innumerable opportunities of studying moving objects occur. Look at the clouds. Watch their shadows over the fields, along the sides of the hills, and more fascinating and difficult still, upon the surface of the moving sea. Observe the sea itself, with its many forms of movement. See the trees bending in the wind, and, if the sun is shining, admire the sparkle of reflected light from their leaves. Watch a child's hair blown about by the wind. Note the movements of the birds. Observe the falling snow. Be on the alert always for the many forms of movement surrounding us in nature.

CHAPTER XVI

EXECUTION

ALTHOUGH in the earliest directions as to the study of painting very little stress was laid upon the manner of execution, it is a most important matter. At the beginning, the great point is to learn to see and to put down faithfully the varied tints and tones seen, of their exact shapes and in their proper places.

When this power has been acquired, the student should turn his attention in some degree to the matter of execution.

This will be well studied by careful and continuous observation of the works by the great masters of the art. We can gain some insight regarding skilful handling of the brush by comparing the works of Franz Hals, Vandyke, Velasquez, Raeburn, and Gainsborough. And there we find that the supreme quality is that of refinement. However bold the execution appears, it is always refined and delicate. Refinement combined with strength, is the chief characteristic of the great works.

As to handling, bad habits may easily be formed, and it is well to try always to paint each touch as carefully as possible, and of a shape absolutely identical with that of the shape imitated. Nothing is more vicious than a habit of painting in the little dabs one often sees in the work of amateurs. Boldness in execution will come naturally with persistent practice. And if one paints each touch completely of the shape seen, a style of one's own will gradually be formed.

Care should also be taken to acquire the habit of putting the quickest drying colours in the under-painting wherever possible. If a quick-drying colour is laid over a slow-drying one, in the ordinary progress of a picture, cracking is almost certain to result.

Use hog-hair brushes almost exclusively, as this will tend to give vigour and boldness of execution. Many even of the finer details can be imitated with the hog-hair brush by carefully bringing the edge of one tint up to another, and working with the corners of flat brushes for very small details.

Another useful plan is always to do as much as possible in the first painting. Many things can be completely finished in one painting, and it is wise to aim at this end.

Never leave out of view the fact that simplicity, completeness and refinement of execution are qualities of paramount value in painting

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUSION

WE have now gone into the chief points necessary to a sound and reliable beginning of the study of Oil Painting. We have tried to understand the way to acquire the power of seeing correctly, to learn the character and capacities of our materials, and to become acquainted with the more elementary features of the different branches of the Art in their order of complexity. It will now be well for us to try and learn what will be best for us to bear in mind in going farther into the earnest study of our subject.

We must always beware of being lured from the path of steady, unremitting, and progressive work. In these days much nonsense is talked and written about art. Often it is expressed in a jargon attractive and fluent, but teeming with fallacies and full of pitfalls for the tyro. Some pernicious and eccentric people voice a doctrine which means nothing but complete failure to the weak creatures who are influenced by it. They are fond of saying that So-and-so follows a "stereotyped" form of study, and with spuriously ominous prophecies foretell his becoming "mechanical" and "inartistic." When this doctrine comes to the notice of the student, he should remember that there is no royal road to any Art, or, indeed, to any sort of valuable human achievement. Before one can read, the alphabet must be learnt. It may be a stereotyped and old way of learning, but there is no other way of really becoming able to read. In the Art of Music the mechanical part must first be mastered, or the aspiring musician, who does not know his notes, will strike or sing wrong ones, and his musical efforts will produce detestable discord. We must not be misled by this doctrine, but go steadily on, and, if we have the true artistic faculty, our work will sooner or later assert itself unmistakably with true and permanent effect. A careful comparison of the early works of the great painters with their later ones will show the intelligent student which is the safe course.

Another thing to be borne in mind is the fact that many failures are bound to be made. However numerous they may be, we must strenuously avoid being disheartened. Constant and persistent study and effort are sure to bring success in the end. A good marksman never attains the enviable power of making the maximum number of

bull's-eyes without many misses, and shoots very wide of the mark during his early period of practice.

It is well also to read as much as possible about the efforts of those who have succeeded in the Art. The perusal of such books as Reynolds' Discourses, Haydon's Lectures on Painting, Leonardo da Vinci's Art of Painting, Poynter's Ten Lectures on Painting, Cunningham's Lives of the British Painters. Fuseli's Lectures, Armitage's Lectures, Farington's Diary, and the inimitable Vasari's Lives of the Italian Painters, will afford a fund of information of incalculable use to the student.

The careful examination and comparison of the works of the great painters of different nations, which can be well followed in our own National Gallery and in other British Galleries, will also be of great help. Look also most searchingly at the work of modern painters. The pictures by La Thangue, Tadema, Sargent, Whistler, Shannon, Seymour Lucas, Watts, Britten, Olsson, Cameron, Orpen, as well as in foreign galleries the works of Rubens, Velasquez, Da Vinci, Ingres, Gauguin, Cezanne, and others, will repay the student's attention. Try to discover the aim of the picture. What did the artist make the chief note of his work? Did he aim at a particular effect of light in expressing his idea? Did he try to produce a beautiful result by composition of line, of light and dark, or of colour? Did he make the portrayal of human character, or of expression of the emotions, his dominant note? Compare the methods of painting and the manner of execution. In this way the student will learn something from the work of others, and will be ever progressing towards the ultimate goal of perfection in his art.

Last and most important of all, he must unceasingly study nature, who, after all, is the greatest teacher, having always some lesson to give. In fact, the beginning of the art is really the end. The eye has never done learning to see. With every effort to see nature in all her wondrous beauty, the eye will gain more and more power of seeing, and if the hand is not able to attain absolute perfection in interpreting her most precious beauties, it will, by persistent faithful effort, get nearer and nearer that perfection which is, and has ever been, the ultimate object of all the great workers in this noble art.

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